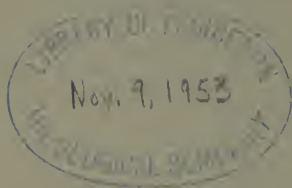


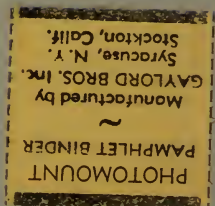
H.E. Kershner

HOW MUCH IS
FREEDOM
WORTH
?

JC585
.K41



JC 585
.K41



LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
NOV 9 1953
PHILOSOPHICAL LIBRARY

RADIO
MESSAGE
NUMBER 3

How Much is Freedom Worth?

by
HOWARD E. KERSHNER

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM FOUNDATION, INC.
PUBLISHERS OF
CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS
6 WEST 58TH STREET, NEW YORK 19

JC585

.K41

✓

HOWARD E. KERSHNER was born in Kansas, graduated from Friends' University; studied economics at Harvard; was granted honorary L.H.D. and LL.D. After twenty-five years in business was director of relief in Europe for the American Friends Service Committee 1939-42; executive vice-president and director of the International Commission for the Assistance of Child Refugees 1939-50; organized and was chairman of the Temporary Council on Food for Europe's Children 1943-45; helped to reactivate thousands of destroyed schools in many countries of Europe, as vice-chairman of the Save the Children Federation and director of its European activities 1945-46; member of the executive committee of Mr. Hoover's National Committee on Food for the Small Democracies 1944-45; member of the first board of directors of CARE 1945-46; and in 1947-48 visited most of the capitals in Latin America, seeking grants for the International Children's Emergency Fund of the United Nations. He is one of the founders and president of the Christian Freedom Foundation, Inc., and editor of its fortnightly journal, *Christian Economics*. He is widely known on three continents as a lecturer, radio speaker and author of magazine articles and books.

—BILL SLATER

How Much is Freedom Worth?*



TO JUSTIFY THEIR DESIRE to tax and tax, spend and spend, elect and elect; to continue their program of more and bigger hand-outs, the politicians point to the needs of the people. These needs are evident; it is desirable to have better housing, food, education and medical services but no prudent man would increase the mortgage on his home to provide luxuries for his family. He will provide as much as he can but he will not endanger the home. If he does he will deprive his family not only of the luxuries but the home as well. To live beyond our means at the price of undermining the con-

* Text of radio talk by Dr. Kershner. A recording (33 $\frac{1}{3}$ R.P.M.) of this address, suitable for radio broadcasting or playing before groups, will be sent without charge.

fidence of the people in their fiscal system is to bring national disaster upon ourselves.

In the effort to socialize our economy, catchy slogans are used such as: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

When the gifted, efficient man, who is accustomed to working 12 to 15 hours a day, is deprived of the extra wealth he thus creates and reduced to the common level, he will stop working from sun to sun. As a result, he himself and society, too, will be the poorer. But we cannot blame him. Who among us would put forth extraordinary effort if he knew he would receive only average pay? On the other hand, the slacker, learning that he is to get a proportionate share of the wealth created has little incentive to work hard and soon adopts the attitude of, "What's the use of working, I'll get mine anyway." So the production of the gifted as well as the slacker declines and there is less for all. This socialist slogan, which first appeared in the Communist Manifesto of 1848, like all communist doctrine is a mere figment of the imagination, having no relationship to fact or practical application in the experience of mankind.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

WHEN THE OPPONENT of the free economic system wishes to annihilate the opposition, he gathers himself together in self-righteousness and shouts, "Aren't human rights more important than property rights?" Let us see if this distinction can be made.

Suppose a man and his wife deny themselves many pleasures, work faithfully and well for 50 years in order to accumulate a competence for a happy retirement. They have raised and educated a fine family of children, faithfully supported the work of the church and have fully discharged their duty to the community. Their little home is paid for. They have a comfortable income and with all duties to family and society worthily met, they look forward to a happy carefree retirement as the crowning experience of a lifetime of faithful effort.

But as a result of the efforts of the human righters and welfare-state spenders their life insurance annuities, bond and mortgage interest are paid to them in 20¢ dollars — and their hopes and dreams are blasted. They apply for the old-age pension but that too is paid to them in dollars with little pur-

chasing power. They have no choice but to swallow their pride and go to live with relatives or over the hill to the poorhouse.

Is there no human right involvement there? Is not the protection of one's savings and the maintenance of a sound fiscal system one of the most important of all human rights? Russians have no property rights and hence they have no human rights. You cannot separate the two. Property rights are human rights. Destroy property rights and you destroy human rights.

THE SCOURGE OF STATISM

THOSE WHO LIVE CLOSEST to and know the most about totalitarian states, avoid them at all costs. At the close of the Russo-Finnish War, Russia annexed 10 per cent of Finland. Living on these lands were half a million Finns, about one-seventh of the population of the country. They were told that they would be undisturbed in the ownership and enjoyment of their farms, houses, livestock and equipment if they would become Russian citizens. If not they must leave with such baggage as they could carry in their hands and live as refugees in other parts of Finland. That was a hard choice. Think of

leaving an ancestral homestead with all the keepsakes and heirlooms that accumulate during the centuries. These brave Finns knew Russia and they did not hesitate.

I was told in Helsinki shortly after the exodus that 18 Finnish families elected to become Russian citizens and all the others, half a million, walked out with nothing. I saw them, living four and five families crowded together in a flimsy, leaky barrack, dressed in rags through the bitter Arctic winter and subsisting on starvation rations. Not one that I saw regretted the choice. They would endure any degree of suffering and death itself rather than surrender their freedom.

How much is freedom worth? To these Finns it was worth all. If we knew as they knew what totalitarianism means, it would be worth all to us. Our ancestors knew the value of freedom and many indentured themselves into five and seven years of slavery for mere passage money to America. Others sold all their possessions for the price of transportation to these shores. For generations we have lived as free men until we have forgotten the scourge of Statism.

I have lived where men spoke in whispers and only to their closest friends, where they disconnected the telephones and would not express an opinion even before their own children. Children are taught in the schools to spy on their parents and report everything they hear at home. How would you like to live where you could not instruct and guide your own children and where you lived in constant fear of the midnight knock of the secret police taking you to the cruellest slavery known to man, or to torture and death?

Why do we barter away our liberty and surrender freedom's birthright for a stinking mess of welfare state pottage brewed by power hungry politicians on the march to Statism? Why do we let them wind the skein of controls and socialization tighter and tighter until eventually they can deliver us bound, gagged and helpless into the toils of the omnipotent state?

*"Is life so dear or peace so sweet
as to be purchased by chains and
slavery?"*

THE RHYTHM OF PROSPERITY

WE ARE TOLD that our prosperity is due to our natural resources but look at Switzer-

land, without seaports, coal, mineral and but little arable land and still maintaining one of the highest standards of living in the world. Why? The answer is hard work, honesty, truthfulness, thrift, self-reliance and sound fiscal policy. Switzerland has the soundest currency in the world today, covered 143 per cent by gold.

On a recent visit to The Netherlands, I sought the explanation for the remarkable recovery in that little land so savagely devastated during the war. I was told that not one man-day of work had been lost since the war on account of strikes. Work, economy and thrift are the rhythm of prosperity. In some manner the Dutch have learned that if they want more, they must work more. They manage to settle their arguments about how wealth is to be divided without stopping the process of creating wealth. When the argument is settled therefore, there is more to divide. We have not yet learned that lesson.

By contrast, I found that railway engineers in France were retiring on pensions at age 50 and other railway workers at 55. Now if men choose to work only half of their lives, they must subsist on half of what they otherwise could have.

WE MUST CHOOSE

IF WE WISH TO REMAIN FREE and to live under a government which we control, we must not tolerate a government-managed economy. Under such a regime, the government must fix wages and prices. Most of us are wage earners and of course, we want higher wages. We therefore demand that the government raise wages. The government must comply or we will throw it out and elect a new government. But wages account for nearly all of production costs and if wages rise, prices rise. It is then necessary to raise wages again and if the government will not comply, the popular vote will elect a new government with the mandate to increase wages. This process goes on and on.

But we are also consumers and we demand lower prices. How can a government give lower prices in the face of rising wages? It attempts it by price fixing, which results in scarcity and soon breaks down, and by subsidy. We are already spending billions of dollars in subsidies and if we go further into government-managed economy, we will spend additional billions. But subsidies mean higher taxes and higher taxes mean still higher prices and more demands for

higher wages. The end of this process is bankruptcy and economic chaos. One government after another falls, while each new government staggers along for a brief period in an effort to do the impossible.

If you want government-managed economy, you can have it but you must give up your freedom. Russia has government-managed economy but no freedom. No one in Russia demands the same pay for 40 hours as formerly for 48. No one asks for lower prices, more holidays, shorter hours, bigger pensions and more privileges of all kinds. The government manages the economy and the people have nothing to say about it. They do not control their government. They are its slaves.

We can have freedom with a free economy and live under a government which we control, or we can have a totalitarian state with a government-managed economy and be the slaves of that government. We cannot have both. We must choose. Socialism and free government are inimical. On the other hand, socialism or a government controlled economy and the totalitarian state are natural partners. We can choose one or the other. But if we persist much farther in

the present policy of drifting into socialism, we will have made the choice and our freedom will disappear as we pass under the control of the all powerful centralized state.

Is the situation hopeless? No, for the arm of the Lord is not shortened. If the spirit of God could move upon the face of the waters to bring forth this creation long ago, it can still move in the hearts of mankind, arousing them to their danger and stirring them to strenuous effort to preserve their liberties.

Real sincere religion, sound economics and freedom go hand in hand. If we lose one, we shall lose all three. They are interdependent. Freedom is based on the spiritual qualities that the saints and prophets have thundered at us down through the ages. These are honesty, truthfulness, generosity, kindness, self-reliance and thrift. Our ancestors had these qualities. They came to these shores reading their Bibles every day and going to their churches two and three times a week. They were not saints but they had the fundamentals of the word of God ground into their subconscious minds, creating there a basic integrity which became the foundation for the great pros-

perity springing up under the system of free government which they established. They sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and these other things were added unto them.

When the Mayflower cast anchor in Plymouth Harbor, with its weary load of storm-tossed human beings, who, after years of exile in Holland had suffered for weeks in their tiny bark on the stormy Atlantic, how eagerly they must have looked at the solid ground, their new home. It was Saturday afternoon but in spite of their land hunger, they remained on board continuing their preparations for observing the Sabbath day. For 42 hours, Saturday afternoon and evening and all day Sunday, they remained on board worshiping God and remembering to keep the Sabbath day holy. Not until Monday morning did they set foot on land. They were in dead earnest in seeking the Kingdom of God first.

The way to make a beginning toward restoring our country to a sound basis is to dust off our Bibles and read them, to get down on our knees and ask God to forgive us for our neglect, indifference and sinful-

ness and get back into our churches worshipping God, singing the great hymns and listening to the voices of our ministers.

William Penn truly said, if we will not be governed by God, we must be governed by tyrants.

ADDITIONAL COPIES
of this pamphlet, as well as a 33 $\frac{1}{3}$
R.P.M. recording (see *footnote, page*
three), are available from the
Foundation without charge.

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM FOUNDATION, INC. is a non-profit, tax exempt, educational institution dedicated to promoting a better understanding of the relationship of Christianity, freedom and economics.

It is composed of Protestant ministers of the principal denominations from all sections of our country. It is non-political, non-sectarian and not affiliated with any other organization nor responsible to any person or group. Its members are committed to a search for truth and to the development of a sensitive Christian conscience along with an understanding of economic law.

The Christian Freedom Foundation is supported by voluntary contributions and subscriptions to its fortnightly journal, *Christian Economics*. Contributions to the Foundation are deductible from taxable income.

"Christian Economics"

... a fortnightly journal, published by the Christian Freedom Foundation, Inc., is devoted to a discussion of the fundamental problems of economics, especially as related to Christianity and freedom. By Christian economics, we mean an economic system operated by Christian men as nearly as they know how in harmony with the laws of God. Economic laws, like all of God's laws, are immutable. They set forth the means by which men may attain material well-being just as other laws of God show him the way to spiritual development—to sonship of God.

Its editors read all shades of opinion and endeavor to point out the errors of welfare statism, socialism, fascism and collectivism under whatever name and to show that freedom ordained by God in the economic realm as well as in other relationships of life produces greater abundance and well-being than any other system.

The subscription price of *Christian Economics* is \$1 per year.



JC585 .K41
How much is freedom worth?

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00056 9238